

## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## INFORMATION REPORT

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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COUNTRY Albania

REPORT

SUBJECT Port of Vlone

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This is UNEVALUATED Information

THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.  
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.  
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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Approach Routes

1. No instructions are given ships regarding the route to be followed to the Vlone landfall, nor for departure from the port enroute to Durres. During navigation from Cape Santa Maria di Leuca to Vlone, and from there to Durres vessels follow normal navigational procedures and the instructions contained in regular charts and publications.
2. It is not believed that mine fields exist in the vicinity of Saseno or along the coastal line of traffic between Vlone and Durres. This theory would appear to be confirmed by the fact that Vlone port authorities, despite explicit requests in this connection, do not specify a particular route for vessels to follow between Saseno and Durres. This despite the fact that atmospheric and visibility conditions at times would have made the issuance of particular sailing instructions a matter of urgency. On this basis the possible existence of mines or other underwater obstacles must be limited to the area east of Saseno which is indicated by the circle in dotted lines which appears on the sketch map attached hereto.
3. As one vessel was proceeding southeast towards Vlone and had reached a point approximately a mile and a half from the northern extremity of Saseno, it was halted by whistle signals from an Albanian navy tugboat navigating along the coast between Cape Linguetta and Point San Giovanni.    
  the tugboat signal was intended to call the vessel's attention to the net barrier closing the Bay of Vlone which was not too evident owing to poor visibility conditions at the time. Entering the port of Vlone the vessel followed the route indicated on attached sketch map, led in by the tugboat mentioned above. The same route was followed on the vessel's departure from Vlone.

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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4. Saseno Lighthouse

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It is possible that the island's light-house is not now in commission because, despite its considerable strength, it was not visible even when lifting fog permitted the Cap Linguetta coast to be seen.

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5. Net Barrier

The bay of Vlone is closed off by a net barrier stretching roughly between Point San Giovanni and Point Peschiera, as indicated on sketch map. The barrier is held in position by cylindrical buoys painted black or a dirty gray. There were eleven buoys visible and it is believed there may have been numerous others not visible above the surface of the water. The barrier begins with a buoy anchored at a point marked (1/a) on sketch map, some 300-350 meters from Point San Giovanni. Two other buoys (marked 1/b and 1/c on sketch) anchored approximately 100-150 meters from land probably serve the purpose of holding the movable length of net used to close the port entrance, which is located between the buoys marked (1/a) and (1/b). A second entrance exists at the opposite end of the barrier, but it is not known whether it can be used by larger vessels. Several 100-120 ton motor vessels were seen to transit this entrance.

6. Piers

There is a pier located at the point marked (3) on sketch map, which is approximately one mile south of the urban center of Vlone. This pier is of the shape indicated in attached figure I. It consists of two distinct portions built at different times: the pier's shore end, some 250 meters long, was built during Italian occupation of the country; the seaward end, approximately 100 meters long, has apparently been built subsequently by the port's Soviet-Albanian administration. The pier is built on cement piles, approximately 2.5-3 meters high, is approximately 15 meters wide at its seaward end, and approximately 16-17 meters wide at the land end. Its surface is paved in asphalt or in cement.

7. At the point marked (a) in figure I there is a searchlight placed on a red painted girder tower some three meters high. At the point marked (b) there is a green painted wooden sentry box used by the pier's guard. A water hydrant is situated near the sentry box at the point marked (c), and is fed by a 60 mm. pipe laid on the pier's surface. Two mooring buoys are located at points marked (d) and (e), some 30 meters from the pier. A number of small floats supporting mooring lines are located east of the pier at the point marked (f) on the sketch. Vessels can tie up at either side of the pier, but it can be used by medium tonnage ships only at its seaward end and on the western side. Here the water is only slightly deeper than 20 feet at the point marked (g), and only about 16 feet at the point marked (h). On the other side of the pier and closer to the shore the water is apparently extremely shallow.
8. Asphalt in 25 kilogram chunks, empty steel drums, and rough unplanned lumber were observed to be loaded aboard vessels at this pier. Gasoline in drums, sheet metal, wire rods, construction steel, gas and water piping of various sizes between 10 and 12 centimeters, and cement in sacks were seen to be unloaded here. At one time there existed a similar pier at the point marked (4) on sketch map. Now there exists only a useless portion of its surface near the shore and a few twisted and broken piles. At the point marked (5) on sketch map, in the vicinity of Point Coricosso, there is a mooring place for tankers. It was not determined whether there are piers or other installations at that point as the view was obstructed by a tanker moored there.

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9. Roads to the Port

The port of Vlone is served by a road, marked (6) on sketch map, which joins the principal pier with the center of the city. Approximately 300 meters from the pier this road crosses another (marked (7) on sketch map) which follows the coast line towards Point Batteria. Asphalt arrives in the port area from this road. It has been noticed that motor trucks carrying asphalt stop regularly at the point marked (8) where the two roads join. For this reason it is believed that a weighing scales is located there.

10. Port Area

The shore line in the port area is of beach type. Immediately behind the beach, among the vegetation, a number of cottages and small buildings, whose use is unknown have been observed. In the vicinity of Point Batteria, near a building which, it is believed was one time the Italian army hospital, there are a number of large masonry-walled buildings with gabled roofs which are a faded yellow color. These are believed to be troops' barracks. On the beach at the point marked (9) on sketch map, approximately 400 meters from the pier, there is a long narrow building, apparently subdivided into a number of small rooms, which is probably a bathing establishment.

11. Point San Giovanni and the Gognurufa Valley

Along the rocky coast above Point San Giovanni two or three cement bunkers and a number of circular excavations in the rock face have been observed. The latter had every appearance of being intended for use as gun emplacements. Visibility conditions, plus possible camouflage, do not permit more accurate observation, and it is not known whether these installations are in commission. Along the shore line at the entrance to Gognurufa Valley west of Point San Giovanni, a number of one-storey masonry buildings have been observed. Their use is not known.

12. Island of Saseno

On the coast near the extreme northern end of the island a roof, or perhaps a camouflage net, has been observed. This object appeared to have been placed there for the express purpose of hiding installations beneath it. On a hilltop above this roof there is located a small masonry-walled building, faded yellow in color. A red star and a slogan are painted on its visible wall. This building has the appearance of a specially built observation post.

## 13. In the case of one ship, inspection at the port of Vlone, both on arrival and on departure, was carried out by a group of 7-8 persons, including both police and customs' authorities, of whom some were officers. The vessel's main w/t transmitter, binoculars, photographic apparatus, and all items subject to duty were sealed by port authorities. The inspecting personnel seemed to be thoroughly unfamiliar with their duties. To prevent use of the w/t transmitter, for example, its main power switch was sealed. Completely overlooked, however, was the fact that the transmitter could have been worked by use of battery power without disturbing the seal. Cameras and binoculars were sealed in a locker with two doors; only one of these was sealed.

## 14. During the vessel's stay in the port, a permanent guard of three soldiers was posted on deck, and one on the bridge. All guards were armed with pistols carried in hip holsters beneath their overcoats. An Albanian police officer repeatedly attempted to carry out Communist propaganda among crew members of the vessel. Shipboard personnel were not allowed to disembark even for the brief period required to check the vessel's draught. Stevedores worked in two continuous twelve hour shifts (1700-1900 hours, 1900-0700 hours) without time off for meals or other reasons.

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They were observed to eat, without any slightest hesitation, the garbage thrown overboard from the vessel.

15. The maritime agency servicing the vessel at Vlone was "Inflot". The "Export-Import" is an organization which oversees loading and unloading of vessels. The two organizations are controlled from Tirana and their local representative is apparently the individual who presented himself to the vessel as Soviet Russian engineer Nicolai Koptiev.

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In exchange for the generous meals offered him on board, he gave Russian lessons to the vessel's officers and passed out a few extremely bad Albanian cigarettes and a few Russian newspapers. During his shipboard visits Koptiev was accompanied by an Italian interpreter, a distinguished and well-mannered individual some 35 years old. The interpreter spoke perfect Italian, but his attitude was one of extreme terror.

16. Albanian personnel in charge of arranging cargoes in the hold, and personnel in the port loading-unloading office also demonstrate an utter lack of competence in their jobs. When requested, for example, whether the vessel's cargo plan should be drawn up in metric tons or in British tons, the Albanian in charge of this port office insisted that the cargo be calculated in Albanian tons. Piloting is carried out by a "practical" seaman whose services are limited to the tying up and casting off phases. The pilot is some 50 years old and appears to be the sole member of the port personnel with any knowledge of his job. He has a four-oared boat which is used also for the purpose of carrying mooring lines.
17. It is almost impossible to take aboard water at Vlone because of the scant flow at the only hydrant on the pier. The port is not supplied with water hoses. The main pier is not equipped with fixed installations for loading and unloading. Cargo handling is by means of shipboard gear. In the case of smaller vessels not equipped with cargo handling apparatus, such operations are carried out by three mobile cranes mounted on motor trucks. This equipment, whose capacity is estimated at 1-2 tons is mounted on Soviet "AMA" motor trucks. In operation, the trucks are backed up on the pier in the manner indicated in attached figure II. Cargoes unloaded on the pier are taken away by "ZMA" motor trucks, painted green, and driven by civilians. Total number of such motor trucks at the port is not known, but judging from the movement observed it must be considerable.

18. [redacted] the following vessels were [redacted] in Vlone:

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- b. 8 or 9 Albanian motor sailers of 100-150 tons capacity.
- c. 3 recently constructed motor fishing vessels.
- d. A few small sailing craft.
- e. An Albanian navy tug armed with a single 20 mm. machine gun mounted astern. This is a standard American motor-type tug ("TANAK") with steel hull. It is commanded by an officer, and is probably used to handle logistic services connected with coastal detachments between Vlone and Cape Linguetta and Saseno.

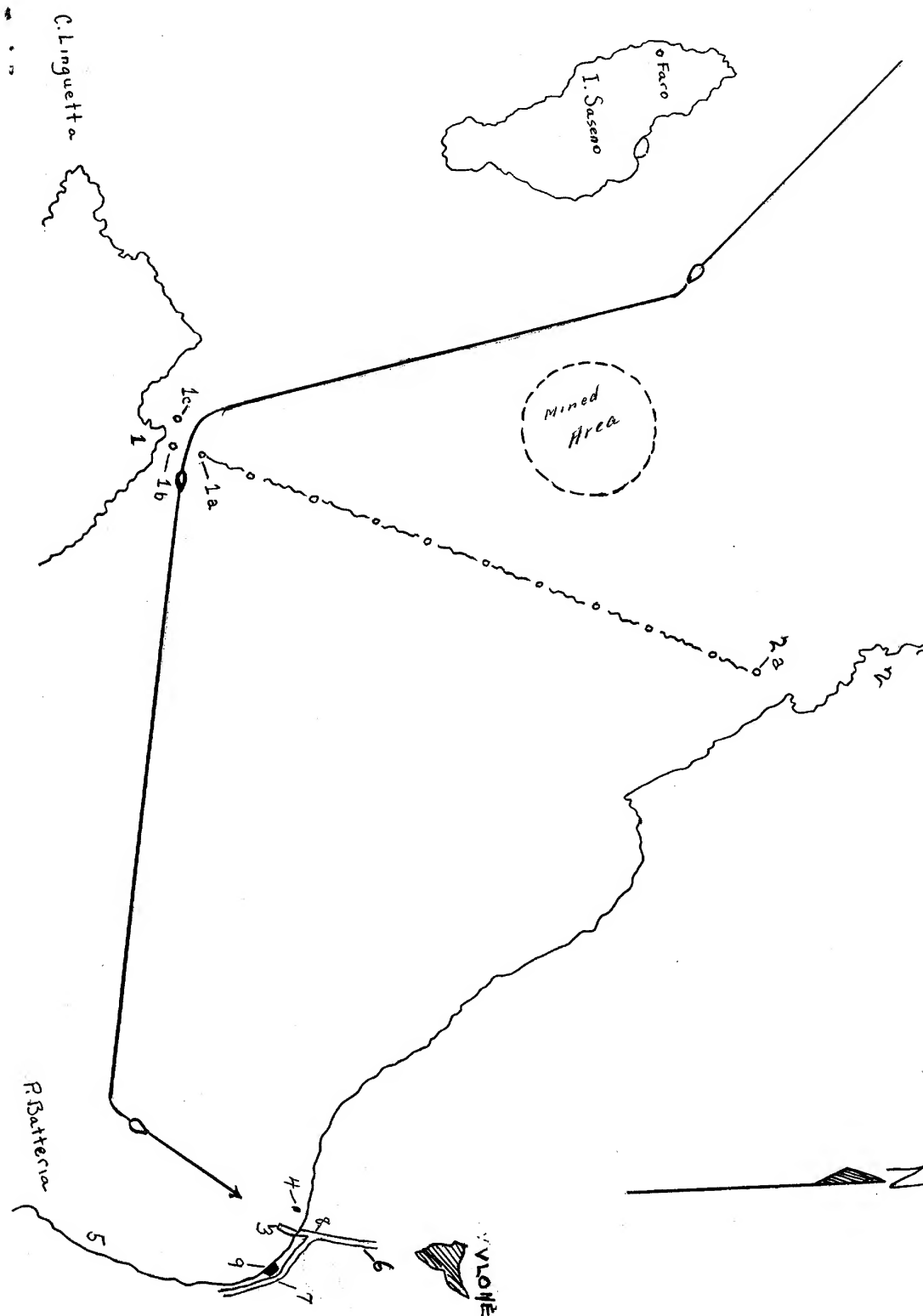
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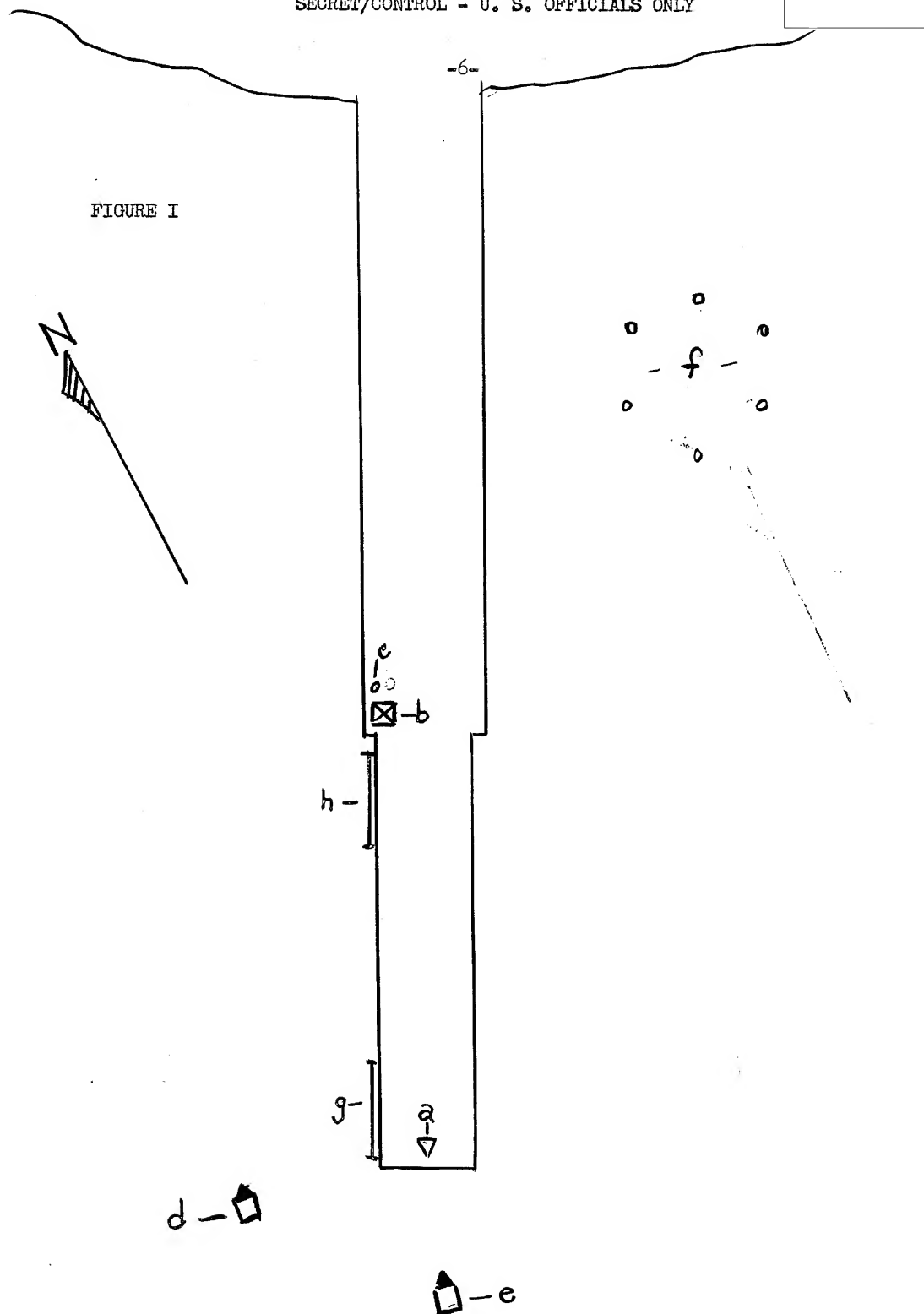
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BAY OF VLONE  
(Not to Scale)



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PIER SOUTH OF VLONE  
 MARKED (3) ON SKETCH  
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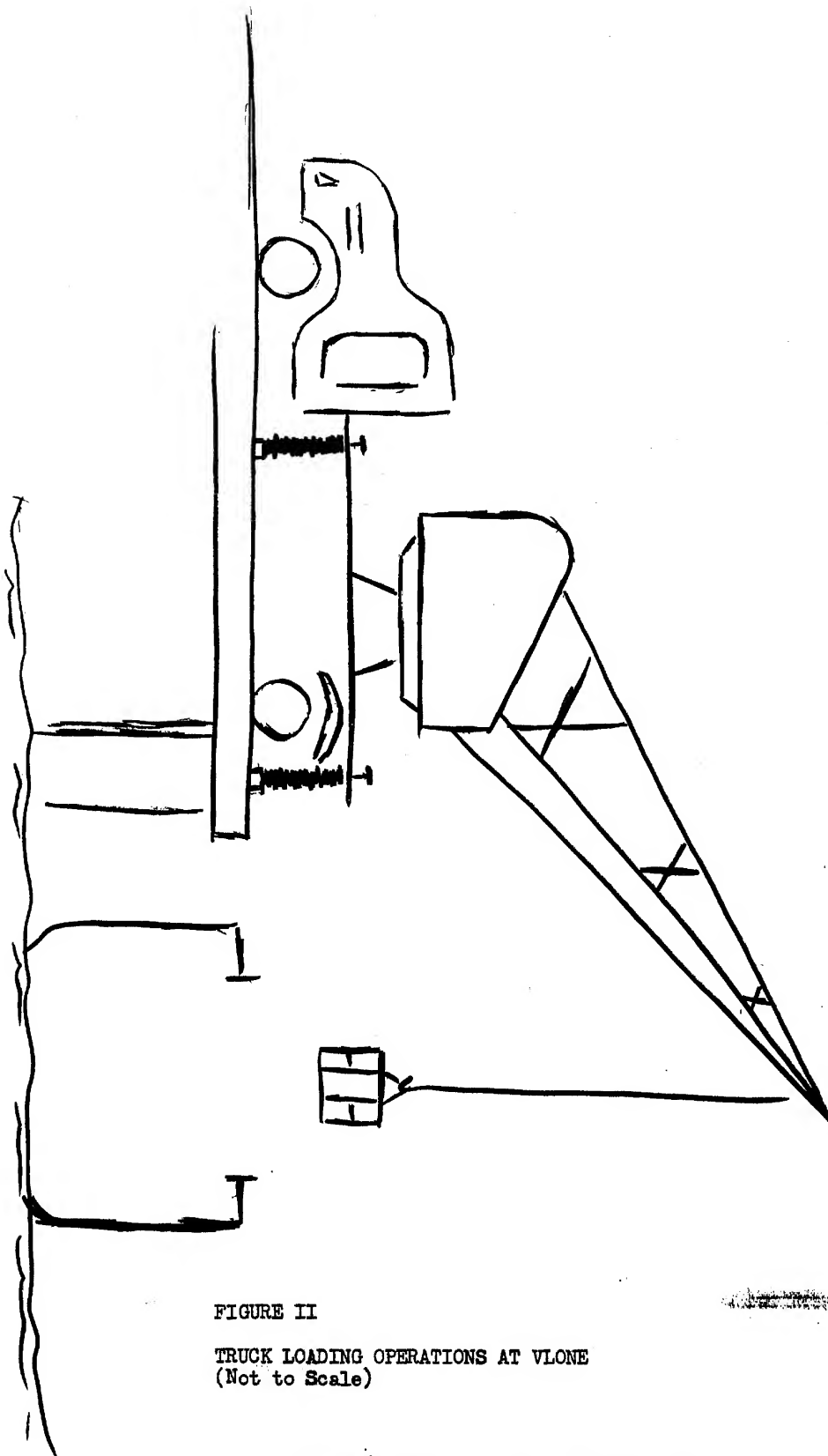


FIGURE II

TRUCK LOADING OPERATIONS AT VLONE  
(Not to Scale)

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